

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) Process for increasing the molecular weight of a polyamide via solid-state post-condensation by exposing the polyamide prepolymer in the solid-state at elevated temperature to an inert gas atmosphere, wherein the process comprises a step (a) wherein the gas atmosphere to which the polyamide is exposed has a dew temperature T_{dew-1} followed by a step (b) wherein the gas atmosphere to which the polyamide is exposed has a dew temperature T_{dew-2} , whereby T_{dew-1} is higher than T_{dew-2} , and wherein the gas atmosphere of step (a) has a temperature T_{gas-1} and the gas atmosphere in step (b) has a temperature T_{gas-2} such that T_{gas-1} is at least 10⁰C higher than T_{gas-2} , and wherein at the end of step (a), the polyamide has an intermediate-viscosity corresponding with a viscosity number VN_{int} and at the end of step (b) the polyamide polymer has an end-viscosity corresponding with a viscosity number VN_{end} , whereby VN_{int} is at most 90% of VN_{end} , measured according to ISO 307.
2. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, wherein the polyamide is polyamide-6 or polyamide-12.
3. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, wherein the polyamide has a melting temperature of at least 260⁰C.
4. (Original) Process according to Claim 3, wherein the polyamide is chosen from the group consisting of polyamide-4.6, copolymers thereof, polyamide-6.6 and copolymers thereof.
5. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein T_{dew-1} is at least 10⁰C higher than T_{dew-2} .

6. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein T_{dew-2} is at most 20°C .
7. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein T_{dew-1} is at least 30°C .
8. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein the gas atmospheres of step (a) and step (b) have a temperature between 20°C and 100°C below the melting temperature of the polyamide polymer.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein the polyamide has an initial- viscosity number VN_0 of at most 100 ml/g.
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) is started after the polyamide in step (a) has obtained an intermediate-viscosity corresponding with a viscosity number VN_{int} of at least 70 ml/g, measured according to ISO 307.
13. (Previously Presented) Process according to Claim 1, wherein the polyamide comprises at least one additive chosen from the group consisting of fillers, reinforcing agents, flame retardants, colorants and stabilizers.